



Foreign Affairs Manual Circular

SUBJECT: Direction, Coordination and Supervision
of Interdepartmental Activities Overseas

No. 385

March 4, 1966

1. Authority and Responsibility of the Secretary of State

To assist the President in carrying out his responsibilities for the conduct of foreign affairs, he has assigned to the Secretary of State authority and responsibility to the full extent permitted by law for the overall direction, coordination and supervision of interdepartmental activities of the United States Government overseas.

2. Activities Not Included

Such activities do not include those of United States military forces operating in the field where such forces are under the command of a United States area military commander and such other military activities as the President elects to conduct through military channels.

3. Definition of "Interdepartmental" Activities

Activities which are internal to the execution and administration of the approved programs of a single department or agency and which are not of such a nature as to affect significantly the overall U.S. overseas program in a country or region are not considered to be interdepartmental matters. If disagreement arises at any echelon over whether a matter is interdepartmental or not in the meaning of this circular the dissenting department or agency may appeal to the next higher authority as provided for in the following paragraph.

4. The Concept of Executive Chairmen

The Secretary of State will discharge his authority and responsibility primarily through the Under Secretary of State and the regional Assistant Secretaries of State, who will be assisted by

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interdepartmental groups of which they will be executive chairmen, i. e., with full powers of decision on all matters within their purview, unless a member who does not concur requests the referral of a matter to the decision of the next higher authority.

5. The Senior Interdepartmental Group (SIG)

To assist the Secretary of State in discharging his authority and responsibility for interdepartmental matters which cannot be dealt with adequately at lower levels or by present established procedures, including those of the Intelligence Community, the Senior Interdepartmental Group (SIG) is established. The SIG shall consist of the Under Secretary of State, Executive Chairman, the Deputy Secretary of Defense, the Administrator of the Agency for International Development, the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Director of the United States Information Agency, and the Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs. Representatives of other departments and agencies with responsibility for specific matters to be considered will attend on invitation by the Chairman. Such other departments and agencies may raise matters for consideration of the SIG.

The Chairman of the Senior Interdepartmental Group (SIG) may designate the Under Secretary for Economic Affairs or the Deputy Under Secretary for Political Affairs to chair the SIG in the Chairman's absence.

The SIG will assist the Secretary of State by:

- a. ensuring that important foreign policy problems requiring interdepartmental attention receive full, prompt and systematic consideration;
- b. dealing promptly with interdepartmental matters referred by the Assistant Secretaries of State or raised by any of its members, or, if such matters require higher level consideration, reporting them promptly to the Secretary of State for appropriate handling;
- c. assuring a proper selectivity of the areas and issues to which the United States Government applies its resources;
- d. carrying out other duties and responsibilities of the Special Group (counterinsurgency), which has been abolished;

- e. conducting periodic surveys and checks to verify the adequacy and effectiveness of interdepartmental overseas programs and activities.

The SIG will encourage interdepartmental action and decision-making at the Assistant Secretary level to the greatest extent possible.

The SIG will meet in the Department of State regularly and specially at the call of the Chairman.

The Chairman will be supported by a full-time staff headed by a Staff Director who will also serve as the Special Deputy Executive Secretary of the Department. Staff personnel will be furnished on the Chairman's request by the departments and agencies represented on the SIG. The Chairman may request departments and agencies to designate a point of contact for the Staff Director on matters affecting their interests.

The Staff Directors of the Interdepartmental Regional Groups will assist the Staff Director of the SIG as he requires by providing staff support on regional matters of interest to the SIG.

6. The Interdepartmental Regional Group (IRG)

To assist the Assistant Secretaries, an Interdepartmental Regional Group (IRG) is established for each geographic region corresponding to the jurisdiction of the geographic bureaus in the Department of State. Each IRG shall be composed of the regional Assistant Secretary of State, Executive Chairman, and a designated representative from Defense, AID, CIA, the Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, USIA and the White House or NSC staff. Representatives of other departments and agencies with responsibility for specific matters to be considered will attend on invitation by the Chairman.

The regional Assistant Secretaries, in their capacities as Executive Chairmen of the IRGs, will ensure the adequacy of United States policy for the countries in their region and of the plans, programs, resources and performance for implementing that policy. They will be particularly watchful for indications of developing crises and when such matters require higher level consideration, will recommend appropriate measures to higher authority for dealing with emergent critical situations in their regions.

A regional Assistant Secretary may designate a Deputy Assistant Secretary to chair the IRG in the Chairman's absence. IRG meeting and staff procedures will be patterned on the SIG.

Interdepartmental Leadership and Coordination of Country Matters

A new position of Country Director will be established in the regional bureaus to serve as the single focus of responsibility for leadership and coordination of departmental and interdepartmental activities concerning his country or countries of assignment. In particular he will:

- a. provide continuing departmental and interdepartmental leadership in planning, coordination, and implementation of decisions;
- b. raise specific matters for consideration by the IRG, and bring detailed knowledge to IRG discussions when so requested;
- c. serve as the base for crisis task force operations as necessary.

The Country Director will be responsible for seeing that the Ambassador's needs are served both within the Department and government-wide. He will ensure that the mission is fully supported in the full range of its requirements: policy, operations and administration.

Each Country Director will organize and develop such contacts, channels and mechanisms as are appropriate to and necessary for full interdepartmental leadership on country matters, and for full support to the Assistant Secretary.

To assist in providing guidance and direction to the Country Director, the Assistant Secretary will have one or more Deputy Assistant Secretaries whose areas of responsibility will be defined by the Assistant Secretary.

Positions of Office Director and officer-in-charge will be abolished as the transition is made to the establishment of Country Director positions.